EVENING TELEGRAPH-SUPPLEMENT

THOROUGHFARE.

CHARLES DICKENS AND WILKIE COLLINS

[Continued from our last time.] ACT H.

VENDALE MAKES LOVE.

The summer and the autumn had passed. Christmas and the New Year were at hand.

As executors honestly bent on performing their duty towards the dead, Vendale and Bintrey had held more than one auxious consultation on the subject of Wilding's will. The lawyer had declared from the first, that it was simply impossible to take any useful action in the matter at all. The only obvious inquiries to make, in relation to the lost man, had been made already by Wilding himself; with this result, that time and death together had not left a trace of him discoverable. To advertise for the claimants to the property, it would be necessary to mention particulars-a course of proceeding which would invite half the impostors in England to present themselves in the character of the true Walter Wilding. "If we find a chance of tracing the lost man, we will take it. If we don't, let us meet for another consultation on the first anniversary of Wilding's death," So Bintrey advised. And so, with ti e most carnest desire to fulfil his dead friend's wishes, Vendale was fain to let the matter rest for the present.

Turning from his interest in the past to his Interest in the future, Vendale still found himself confronting a donotrol prospect. Months ou mouths had passed since his first visit to Soho Square—and through all that time the one language in which he had told Marguerite that he loved her was the language of the eyes, assisted, at convenient opportunities, by the

language of the hand.
What was the obstacle in his way? The one immovable obstacle which had been in his way from the urst. No matter how fairly the oppor-tunities looked, Vendale's efforts to speak with Marguerite alone, ended invariably in one and the same result. Under the most accidental circomstances, in the most innocent manner possible. Obenreizer was always in the way.

With the last days of the old year came an unexpected chance of spending an evening with Marguerite, which Vendale resolved should be a chance of speaking privately to her as well. cordial note from Obenreizer invited him, on New Year's Day, to a little family dinner in Boho Square. 'We shall be only four," the note said. "We shall be only two," Vendale deter-

mined, "before the evening is out!"

New Year's Day, among the English, is asso ciated with the giving and receiving of dinners, and with nothing more. New Year's Day, among the foreigners, is the grand opportunity of the year for the giving and receiving o presents. It is occasionally possible to acclimatize a foreign custom. It this instance Vendale felt no hesitation about making the attempt, His one difficulty was to decide what his New Year's gift to Margacrite should be. The detensive pride of the peasant's daughter—morbidly sensitive to the inequality between her social position and his—would be secretly roused against him if he ventured on a rich offering. A git which a poor man's purse might purchase was the one gift that could be trusted to find its way to her heart, for the giver's sake. Stoutly resisting temptation, in the form of diamonds and rubies, Vendale bought a brooch of the filagree work of Genoa-the simplest and most unpretending ornament that he could find in the

jeweller's shop. He slipped his gift into Marguerite's hand as she held it out to welcome him on the day of

This is your first New Year's Day in Eng-

land," he said. "Will you let me help to make it like a New Year's Day at home?"

She thanked him, a little constrainedly, as she looked at the jeweller's box, unsertain what it might contain. Opening the box, and dis-covering the studiously simple form under which Vendale's little keepsake offered itself to her, she penetrated his motive on the spot. Her face turned on him brightly, with a which said, "I own you have pleased and flat-tered me." Never had she been so charming, in Vendale's eyes, as she was at that moment. Her winter dress—a petticoat of dark silk, with a bodice of black velvet rising to her neck, and enclosing it soilly in a little circle of swan's down—heightened, by all the force of contrast, the dazzling fairness of her halr and her complexion. It was only when she turned aside from him to the glass, and, taking out the brocch that she wore, put his New Year's gift in its place, that Vendale's attention wandered far enough away from her to discover the presence of other persons in the room. low became conscious that the hands of Obenreizer were affectionately in possession of his He now heard the voice of Obenrelzen thanking him for his attention to Marguerite, with the faintest possible ring of mockery in its tone. ("such a simple present, dear sir! and showing such nice tact!") He now discovered, for the first time, that there was one other guest, and but one, besides himself, whom Obenreizer presented as a compatitot and friend. The friend's face was monldy, and the friend's figure was fat. His age was suggestive of the autumnal period of human life. In the course of the eve-pting he developed two extraordinary capacities. One was a capacity for silence; the other was a capacity for emptying buttles,

Madame Dor was not in the room. Neither was there any visible place reserved for ner when they sat down to table. Obenreizer explained that it was "the good Dor's simple habit to dine always in the middle of the day. She onld make ner excuses later in the evening. Vendale wondered whether the good Dor had on this occasion, varied her domestic employ ment from cleaning Obenreizer's gloves to cook ment from cleaning Obenreizer's gloves to cooking Obenreizer's dinner. This at least was certan—the dishes served were, one and all, as achievements in cookery, high above the reach of the rude elementary art of England. The dinner was unobtrusively periect. As for the wine, the eyes of the speechless friend rolled over it, as in solemn ecstasy. Sometimes he said "Good!" when a bottle came in full; and sometimes he said "Ah!" when a bottle went out empty—and there his contributions to the out empty-and there his contributions to the gayety of the evening ended,
Silence is occasionally infectious. Oppressed

by private anxieties of their own, Marguerite and Venciale appeared to seel the influence of the speechless friend. The whole responsibility of keeping the talk going rested on Obenreizer's shoulders, and manfully did Openreizer sustain it. He opened his heart in the character of an enlightened foreigner, and sang the praises of England. When other topics ran dry, he returned to this mexhaustible source, and always set the stream running again as copiously as ever. Obenreizer would have given an arm an eye, or a leg to have been born an English-man. Out of England there was no such institution as a home, no such thing as a tireside no such object as a besutiful woman. His dear Miss Marguerite would excuse him, if he accounted for her attractions on the theory that

CHRISTMAS STORY English blood must have been mixed at some former time with their obscure and unknown behold a tall, clean, plump, and solid people!

Look at their cities! What magnificence in their public buildings! What admirable order and propriety in their streets! Admire their laws, combining the eternal principle of justice with the other eternal principle of pounds, shillings, and pence; and applying the product to all civil injuries, from an injury to a man's honor, to an injury to a man's nose! You have ruined my daughter—pounds, shillings, and pence! You have knocked me down with a blow in my tace—pounds, shillings, and pence! Where was the material prosperity of such a country as that to stop? Obenreizer, projecting nimself into the future, lailed to see the end of it. Obenreizer's enthusiasm entreated permission to exhale itself, English fashton, in a toust. Here is our modest little dinner over, here is our frugal dessert on the table, and here is the admirer of England conforming to national costoms, and making a speech! A toast to your white cliffs of Albion, Mr. Vendale! to your pational virtues, your charming climate, and your fa-clusting women! to your Hearths, to your Homes, to your Habess Corpus, and to

all your other institutions! In one word—to Engiand! Heep-heep-heep! hooray! Obenreizer's voice had baresy chanted the last note of the English cheer, the speechless friend had barely drained the last drop out of his glass, when the festive proceedings were in-terrupted by a modest tap at the door. A weman-servant came in, and approached her master with a little note in her hand. Obenreizer opened the note with a trown; and, after reading it with an expression of genuine annoyauce, passed it on to his compatrior and friend. Vendale's spirits rose as he watched tuese pro-

ceedings. Had be found an ally in the annoying little note? Was the long-looked-for chance actually coming at last?

"I am afraid there is no help for it?" said Obenie zer, addressing his fellow-countryman.

"I am afraid we must go."

The speechless friend handed back the letter, shrugged his heavy shoulders, and poured himself out a last glass of wine. His fat fugers linself out a last glass of wine. His fat fugers linself out a last glass of wine. gered fondly round the neck of the bottle. They pressed it with a little amatory squeeze at parting. His globular eyes looked dimit, as through an intervening haze, at Vendale and Marguerite. His heavy articulation labored, and brought forth a whole sentence at a birth. "I think," he said, "I should have liked a little more he said, "I should have liked a little more wide." His breath failed him after that effort; he gasped, and waiked to the door. Obenreizer addressed himself to Vendale with

oben reizer addressed nimself to vondate with an appearance of the deepest distress.

"I am so shocked, so confused, so distressed," he began. "A mistortune has happened to one of my compatriots. He is alone, he is ignorant of your language—I and my good friend, here, have no choice but to go and help him. What can I say in my excuse? How can I describe a salidation at decribing myself, in his way of my affliction at depriving myself in this way of

the honor of your company?"

He paused, evidently expecting to see Vendale take up his hat and retire. Discerning his apportunity at last, Vendale determined to do nothing of the kind. He met Obenreizer dexterously, with Gbenreizer's own weapons. "Pray don't distress yoursell;" he said. "I'll

wait here with the greatest pleasure till you come back." Marguerite blushed deeply, and turned away to her embroidery frame in a corner by the window. The film showed itself in Obenreizer's eyes, and the smile came something sourly to Obenreszer's lips. To have told Vendate that there was no reasonable prospect of his coming back in good time would have been to risk offending a man whose tavorable opinion was of solid commercial importance to him. Acceptng his deleat with the best possible grace, he declared himself to be equally honored and de-lighted by Vendale's proposal. "So frank, so friendly, so English!" He bustled about, ap-parently looking for something he wanted, dis-appeared for a moment through the folding doors communicating with the next room, came back with his hat and coat, and protesting that he would return at the earliest possible moment, embraced Vendale's elbows, and vanished from

the scene in company with the speechless friend

Vennale turned to the corner by the window

in which Marguerite had placed herself with her work. There, as if she had dropped from the ceiling, or come up through the floor— there, in the old attitude, with her face to the slove—sat an Ubstacle that had not been foreseen, in the person of Madame Dor! She half got up, half looked over her broad shoulder at Vendale, and plumped down again. Was she at work? Yes. Cleaning Obsurcizer's gloves, as before! No; darning Obenreizer's stockings. The case was now desperate. Two serious considerations presented themselves to Vendale. Was it possible to put Madame Dor into the stove? The stove wouldn't hold her. Was it possible to treat Madame Dor, not as a living woman, but as an article of furniture? Could woman, but as an article of intrates; count the mind be brought to contemplate this respectable matron purely in the light of a chest of drawers, with a black gauze head-dress against dentally left on the top of it? Yes, the mind could be brought to do that. With a comparatively iriffing effort Vendale's mind did it. As he took has place on the old-fashtoned windowseat, close by Marguerite and her embroidery, a slight movement appeared in the chest of drawers, but no remark issued from it. Let .t be remembered that solid furniture is not easy to move, and that it has this advantage in consequence-there is no lear of upsetting it. Unusually silent and unusually constrained-

with the bright color fast fading from her face,

with a leverish energy possessing her tingersthe pretty Marguerite bent over her embroidery, and worked as if her life depended on it. Hardly less agitated himself, Vendale felt the importance of leaving her very gently to the avowal which he was eager to make -to the other sweeter avowal still, which he was longing to hear. A woman's love is never to be taken by storm; it yields insensibly to a system of gradual approach. It ventures by the round-about way, and listens to the low voice. Vendale led her memory back to their past meetings when they were travelling together in Switzer-land. They revived the impressions, they recalled the events of the happy bygone times. Little by little, Marguerite's constraint vanished. She smiled, she was interested, she looked at Vendale, she grew idle with her needle, she made false stitches in her work. Their voices sank lower and lower; their mees bent nearer to each other as they spoke. And Madame Dor? Madame Dor behaved like an angel. She never looked round; she never said a word; she went on with Obenreizer's stockings. Pulling each stocking up tight over her left arm, and holding that arm aloit from time to time, to catch the light on her work, there were moments, delicate and indescribable moments, when Madame Dor appeared to sitting upside down, and contemplating one of her own respectable legs elevated in the air. As the minutes were on, these elevations followed each other at longer and longer intervals. New and again, the black gauze head-dress nodded, dropped forward, recovered itself. A little heap of stockings slid softly from Madame Dor's lap, and remained unnoticed on the floor. A prodigious ball of worsted followed the stockings, and rolled lazily under the table. The black gauze head-dress nodded, dropped forward, recovered itself, notded again, dropped forward again, and recovered itself no more composite sound, partly as of the purring of an immense cat, partly as of the planing of a soft board, rose over the hushed voices of the lovers, and bummed at regular intervals through the room. Nature and Madame Dor had combined together in Vendale's interests. The best of

women was asleep.
Marguerite rose to stop -not the snoring-let us say, the audible repore of Madame Dor. Vendale la d his hand on her arm, and pressed her

back cently into her chair.

Marguerite resumed her seat. She tried to resume her needle. It was useless; her eyes falled her; her hand falled her; she could find

nothing.
"We have been talking," said Vendale, "of the happy time when we first met, and first travelled together. I have a confession to make. I have been concealing something. When we spoke of my first visit to Switzerland, I told you of all the impressions I had brought back with me to England-except one. Can you guess what that

Her eyes looked steadfastly at the embroidery, and her face turned a little away from hun. Signs of disturbance began to appear in her neat velvet bodice, round the region of the

brooch. She made no reply. Vendale pressed the question without mercy.
"Can you guess what the one Swiss impression is, which I have not told you yet?"

Her face turned back towards him, and a faint smileltrembled on her lips.

"An impression of the mountains, perhaps!"

"No; a much more precious impression than "Of the lakes?"

"No. The lakes have not grown dearer and learer in remembrance to me every day. The lakes are not associated with my happiness in the present, and my hopes in the future. Marguerite! all that makes life worth having hangs, for me, on a word from your lips. Marguerite!

Her head drooped, as he took her hand. He drew her to him, and looked at her. The tears escaped from her downcast eyes, and fell slowly

"O, Mr. Vendsle." she said, sadly, "it would have been kinder to have kept your secret. Have you forgotten the distance between us? It "There can be but one distance between us

Marguerite—a distance of your making. My love, my darling, there is no higher rank in goodness, there is no higher rank in beauty, than yours! Come! whisper the one little word which tells me you will be my wife!" She sighed bitterly. "Think of your family," she murmured; "and think of mine!"

Vendale drew her a little nearer to him. "If you dwell on such an obstacle as that,"

he said, "I shall think but one thought—I shall think I have offended you."

She started, and looked up. "Oh no!" she exclaimed, innocently. The instant the words passed her lips, she saw the construction that might be placed on them. Her confession escaped her in spite of herself. A lovely flush of color overspread her face. She made a momentary effort to disengage herself from her lover's embrace. She looked up at him entreatingly. She tried to speak. The words died on her lips in the kiss that Veudale pressed on them. "Let me go, Mr. Vendale!" she said, faintly. "Call me George."

She laid her head on his bosom. All her heart went out to him at last. "George!" she

'Say you love me!" Her arms twined themselves gently round his neck. Her lips, timidly fouching his check, murmured the delicious words, "I love you!"

In the moment of silence that followed, the sound of the opening and closing of the house door came clear to them through the wintry stillness of the street.

Marguerite started to her feet. "Let me go!" she said. "He has come back!" She hurried from the room, and touched Madame Dor's shoulder in passing. Madame Dor woke up with a loud snort, looked firstover one shoulder and then over the other, peered down into her lap and discovered neither stockings, worsted, nor darning-needle in it. At the
same moment footsteps became audible ascending the stairs. "Mon Dieu!" said Madame Dor,
addressing herself to the stove, and trembling
violently. Vendale picked up the stockings and
the ball, and huddled them all back in a heap
over her shoulder. "Mon Dieu!" said Madame
Dor, for the second time, as the avalanche of
manufactured poursel into her canadious lap. down into her lap and discovered neither stockworsted poured into her capacious lap,

The door opened, and Obenreizer came in His first glance round the room showed him that Marguerite was absent.

he exclaimed, "my niece is away? My mece is not here to entertain you in my absence? This is unpardonable. I shall bring er back instantly Vendale stopped him.

"I beg you will not disturb Miss Obenreizer," he said. "You have returned, I see, without your triend?"

"My friend remains, and consoles our afflicted compatriot. A heart-rending scene, Mr. Ven-The household gods at the pawnbroker's -the family immersed in tears. We all embraced in silence. My admirable friend alone possessed his composure. He sent out, on the spot, for a bottle of wine."

"Can I say a word to you in private, Mr. Obenreizer?" 'Assuredly." He turned to Madame Dor. "My good creature, you are stuking for want of repose. Mr. Vendale will excuse you."

Madame Dor rose, and set forth sideways on her journey from the stove to bed. She dropped a stocking. Vendale picked it up for her, and opened one of the folding-doors. She advanced step, and dropped three more stockings. Vendale, stooping to recover them as before, Obenreizer interfered with profuse apologies, and with a warning look at Madame Dor. Madame Dor acknowledged the look by dropping the whole of the stockings in a heap, and then shuffling away pante-stricken from the scene of disaster. Obentenzer swept up the complete collection fiercely in both hands, "Go!" he cried, giving his prodigious hands. "Go!" he tory swing in the air. Madame Dor said, "Mon Dieu!" and vanished into the next room, pursued by a shower of stockings.

'What must you think, Mr. Vendale," said Obenreizer, closing the door, 'of this deplora ble instrusion of domestic details? For myself, I blush at it. We are beginning the New Year as badly as possible; everything has gone wrong to-night. He seated, pray, and say, what may offer you? Shall we pay our best respects to another of your noble English institutions? It is my study to be, what you call, jolly. I pro-

Pose a grog." Vendule declined the grog with all needful respect for that noble institution.
"I wish to speak to you on a subject in which I am deeply interested," he said. "You must have observed, Mr. Obenreizer, that I have,

from the first, felt no ordinary admiration for your chaiming niece?" 'You are very good. In my niece's name, I "Perhaps you may have noticed, latterly, that

my admiration for Miss Obsureizer has grown into a tenderer and deeper feeling-3" Shall we say friendshp, Mr. Vendale?" "Say love-and we shall be nearer to the

Obenreiger started out of his chair. The faintly discernible beat, which was his nearest approach to a change of color, showed itself suddenly in 'You are Miss Obenreizer's guardian," pursued

Vendale. "I ask you to confer upon me the greatest of all favors-I ask you to give me her and in marriage."

Obeureizer|dropped back into his chair. "Mr. Vendale." he said, "you petrify me."
"I will wait," rejoined Vendale, "antil you have recovered yourself."
"One word before I recover myself. You have said nothing about this to my niece?"
"I have opened my whole heart to your niece.

And I have reason to hope—"
"What!" interposed Obenreizer. "You have made a proposal to my niece, without first asking for my authority to pay your addresses to her?" He struck his hand on the table, and lost

"Don't disturb her," he whispered. "I have bis hold over himself for the first time in Venbeen waiting to tell you a secret. Let me tell dale's experience of him. "Sir," he exclaimed.

bis hold over himself for the first time in Vendale's experience of him, "Sir," he exclaimed indignantly, "what sert of conduct is this? As a man of honor, speaking to a man of honor, how can you justify it?"

"I can only justify it as one of our English institutions," said Vendale, quietly. "You admire our English institutions. I can't honestly tell you, Mr. Obenreizer, that I regret what I have done. I can only assure you that I have not acted in the matter with any intentional disrespect towards yourself. This said, may I ask you to tell me plainly what objection you see to favoring my suit?"

see to favoring my suit?"
"I see this immense objection," answered Obenreizer, "that my niece and you are not on a social equality together. My niece is the daughter of a poor peasant; and you are the son of a gentleman. You do us an honor," he added, lowering him elf again gradually to his customary polite level, "which deserves, and has, our most grateful acknowledgments. But the inequality is too glaring, the sacrifice is too great. You English are a proud people, Mr. Vendale. I have observed enough of this country to see that such a marriage as you propose would be a scandal here. Not a hand would be held out to your peasant-wile; and all your best

friends would desert you,"
'One moment," said Vendale, interposing on his side. 'I may claim, without any great arcogance, to know more of my country-people in general, and of my own friends in particular, than you do: In the estimation of everybody whose opinion is worth having, my wite herself would be the one sufficient justification of my marriage. If I did not feel certain—observe, I say certain—that I am offering her a position say certain—that I am outring the say the which she can accept without so much as the shadow of a humiliation—I would never (cost shadow of a humiliation—and has to be my wife. me what it might) have asked her to be my wite. Is there any other obstacle that you see? Have

you any personal objection to me?"

MOben relzer spread out both his bands in courteous protest. "Personal objection!" he exclaimed. "Dear sir, the bare question is painful to me.

"We are both men of business," pursued Vendale, "and you naturally expect me to sa-tisfy you that I have the means of supporting a I can explain my pecuniary position in two words. I inherst from my parents a fortune of twenty thousand pounds. In half of that sum I have only a life-interest, to which, if I die, leaving a widow, my widow succeeds. If I die, leaving children, the money itself is divided among them, as they come of age. The other Lalf of my fortune is at my own disposal, and is invested in the wine business. I see my way to greatly improving that business. As it stands at present, I cannot state my return from my capital embarked at more than twelve huadred a year. Add the yearly value of my life interest, and the total reaches a present annual income of fifteen hundred pounds. I have the fairest prospect of soon making it more. In the mean time, do you object to me on pecuniary

Driven back to his last intrenchment, Obenreizer rose, and took a turn backwards and forwards in the room. For the moment, he was plainly at a loss what to say or do next.
"Before I answer that last question," he said,
after a little close consideration with himself.

"I beg leave to revert for a moment to Miss Marguerite. You said something just now which seemed to imply that she returns the seniment with which you are pleased to regard

"I have the inestimable happiness," said Vendale, "of knowing that she loves me." Obenreizer stood silent for a moment, with the film over his eyes, and the faintly perceptible beat becoming visible again in his cheeks.

"If you will excuse me for a few minutes," he said, with ceremonious peliteness, "I should like to have the opportunity of speaking to my niece." With those words, he bowed, and quitted Left by himself Vendale's thoughts (as a necessary result of the interview thus far) turned instinctively to the consideration of Obenreizer's motives. He had put obstacles in

the way of the courtship; he was now putting obstacles in the way of the marriage—a marriage offering advantages which even his ingenuity could not dispute. On the face of it, conduct was incomprehensible. Seeking, under the surface, for the answer to that question—and remembering that Obenrei-zer was a man of about his own age; also, that

Margnerite was, strictly speaking, his half-niece only-Vendale asked himself, with a lover's ready jealousy, whether he had a rival to tear, as well as a guardian to conciliate. The thought just crossed his mind, and no more. The sense of Marguerite's kiss still lingering on his check reminded him gently that even the salousy of a moment was now a treason to her. On reflection, it seemed most likely that a personal motive of another kind might suggest

the true explanation of Obenreizer's conduct, Marguerite's grace and beauty were precious ornaments in that little household. t a special social attraction and a special social importance. They armed Obenreizer with a certain influence in reserve, which he could always depend upon to make his house attracive, and which he might always bring more or less to bear on the forwarding of his own private ends. Was he the sort of man to resign such advantages as were here implied, without obtaining the fullest possible compensation for the loss? A connection by marriage with Vendale offered him solid advantages, beyond all doubt. But there were hundreds of men in London with far greater power and far wider influence than Vendale possessed. Was it possible that this man's ambition secretly looked higher than the highest prospects that could be offered to him by the alliance now proposed for his niece? As the question passed through Vendale's mind, the man bimself reappeared -to answer it, or not to answer it, as the event

A marked change was visible in Obenreizer when he resumed his place. His manner was less assured, and there were plain traces about his mouth of recent agitation which had not been successfully composed. Had he said something, referring either to Vendale or to himself, which had roused Marguerite's spirit, and which had placed nim, for the first time, face to face with a resolute assertion of his piece's will? It might or might not be. This was only certain—he looked like a man who had met with a repulse.

"I have spoken to my niece," he began. "I find, Mr. Vendale, that even your influence has not entirely blinded her to the social objections to your proposal,"

"May I ask," returned Vendale, "if that is

result of your interview with Miss Obenreizer? A momentary flash leapt up through the Oben-

reizer film. You are master of the situation," he answered, in a tone of sardonic submission. "If you insist on my admitting it, I do admit it in those words. My niece's will and mine used to be one, Mr. Vendale. You have come between us, and her will is now yours. In my country we know when we are besten, and we submit with our best grace. I submit, with my best grace, on certain conditions. Let us revert to the statement of your pecuniary position. I have an objection to you, my dear sir-a most amazing, a most audacious objection, from a man in my position to a man in yours."

What is it? 'You nave honored me by making a proposal for my niece's hand. For the present (with best thanks and respects), I beg to decline it." Because you are not rich enough."

The objection, as the speaker had foreseen took Vendale completely by surprise. For the moment he was speechless. "Your income is fifteen hundred a year," pur-sued Obenreizer. "In my miserable country I should fall on my knees before your income,

and say, 'What a princely fortune!' In wealthy England, I sit as I am, and say, 'A modest independence, dear sir; nothing more. Enough, perhaps, for a wife in your own rank of life, who has no social projudices to conquer. Not more than half enough for a wife who is a more than ball enough for a wife who is a meanly porn foreigner, and who has all your social prejudices against here.' Sir! if my niece is ever to marry you, she will have what you call upbill work of it in taking her place at statting. Yes, yes; this is not your view, but it remains, immovably remains, my view for all that. For my niece's sake, I claim that this upbill work shall be made as smooth as possible. sible. Whatever material advantages she can have to help her, ought, in common justice, to be hers. Now, tell me, Mr. Vendale, on your afteen hundred a year can your wife bave a house in a fashienable quarter, a footman to open her door, a butler to wait at her table, and a carriage and horses to drive about in? I see the answer in your face—your face says, No. Very good. Tell me one more thing, and I have done. Take the mass of your educated, accomplished, lovely country-women, is it, or is it not, the fact that a lasy who has a house in a fashionable quarter, a footman to open her door, a butler to wait at her table, and a carriage and horses to divise about table, and a carriage and horses to drive about in, is a lady who has gained four steps in female estimation at starting? Yes? or No?"
"Come to the point," said Vendale. "You

wiew this question as a question of terms. What are your terms?"

"The lowest terms, dear sir, on which you can provide your wite with those four steps at start-

ing. Double your present income—the most rigid economy cannot do it in England on less. You said just now that you expected greatly to increase the value of your business. To work, and increase it! I am a good devil after all! On the day when you satisfy me, by plain proofs, that your income has risen to three thousand a year, ask me for my niece's hand, and it is "May I inquire if you have mentioned this

arrangement to Miss Obenreizer?"
"Certainly. She has a last little morsel of regard still left for me, Mr. Vendale, which is not yours yet; and she accepts my terms. In other words, she submits to be guided by her anardian's regard for her welfare, and by her guardian's superior knowledge of the world.'

He threw himself back in his chair, in firm reliance on his position, and in full possession of his excellent temper.

Any open assertion of his own interests, in the situation in which Vendale was now placed, seemed to be (for the present at least) hopeless, He found himself Brerally left with no ground to stand on. Whether Obenreizer's objections were the genuine product of Obenreizer's own view of the case, or whether he was simply delaying the marriage in the hope of ultimately breaking it off altogether—in either of these events any present resistance on Vendale's part would be equally useless. There was no help for it but to yield, making the best terms that he could on his own side.

"I protest against the conditions you impose

on me," he began.

"Naturally," said Obenreizer; "I dare say I should protest myself, in your place."

"Say, however," pursued Vendale, "that I accept your terms. In that case I must be permitted to make two stipulations on my part. In the first place I shall expect to be allowed to see your niece."
"Aha! to see my niece? and to make her in as

great a hurry to be married as you are yourself? suppose I say No? you would see her perhaps without my permission?"
"Decidedly!" "How delightfully frank! How exquisitely

English! You shall see her, Mr. Vendale, on

certain days, which we will appoint together What next?" "Your objection to my income," proceeded Vendule, "has taken me completely by surprise. I wish to be assured against any repetition of that surprise. Your present views of my quaification for marriage require me to have an in-come of three thousand a year. Can I be certain, in the tuture, as your experience of England enlarges, that your estimate will rise no

"In plain English," said Obenreizer, "you doubt my word?" "Do you purpose to take my word for it, when I inform you that I have doubled my income?" asked Vendale. "If my memory does not de ceive me, you stipulated, a minute since, for

'Well played, Mr. Vendale! You combine the foreign quickness with the English solidity. Accept my best congratulations. Accept, also,

my written guarantee." He rose; scated himself at a writing-desk at a side-table, wrote a few lines, and presented them to Vendale, with a low bow. The engagement was perfectly explicit, and was signed and dated with scrupulous care.

"Are you satisfied with your guarantee?" "I am satisfied."

'Charmed to hear it, I am sure. We have had our little skirmish, we have really been wonderfully elever on both sides. For the present our affairs are settled. I bear no malice bear no malice. Come, Mr. Vendale, a good English shake hands." Vendale gave his hand, a little bewildered by

Obenreizer's sudden transitions from one humor

'When may I expect to see Miss Obenreizer again?" he asked, as he rose to go. "Honor me with a visit to-morrow," said Obenreizer, "and we will settle it then. Do have a grog before you go. No? Well! well! we will reserve the grog till you have your three

thousand a year and are ready to be married.

Aha! When will that be ?" 'I made an estimate some months since of the capacities of my business," said Vendale. "If that estimate is correct, I shall double my pre-

sept income—"
"And be married!" added Obenreizer, "And be married," repeated Vendale, a year from this time, Good night."

VENDALE MAKES MISCHIEF. When Vendale entered his office the next morning, the dull commercial routine at Cripple Corner met him with a new face. Marguerite had an interest in it now! The whole machinery which Wilding's death had set in motion, to realize the value of the business-the balancing of ledgers, the estimating of debts, the taking of stock, and the rest of it-was now transformer into machinery which indicated the chanc and against a speedy marriage. After looking over results, as presented by his accountant, and checking additions and subtractions, as rendered by the clerks, Vendale turned his attention to the stock-taking department next, and sent a message to the celiars, desiring to

see the report. The Cellarman's appearance, the moment he put his head in at the door of his master's private room, suggested that something very extraor-dinary must have happened that morning. There was an approach to alacrity in Joey Ladie's movements! There was something which actually simulated cheerfulness in Joey

'What's the matter ?" asked Vendale, "Any-

thing wrong?"

"I should wish to mention one thing," answered Joey. "Young Mr. Vendale, I have never set myself up for a prophet."

"Who ever said you did?"

"No prophet, as far as I've heard tell of that profession," proceeded Joey, "ever lived principally under ground. No prophet, whatever else he might take in at the pores, ever took in wine from morning to night for a number of years took in wine the process of the property will be a property with the process." together. When I said to young Master Wilding, respecting his changing the name of the firm, that one of these days he might find he'd changed the luck of the firm, did I pat myself forward as a prophet? No, I didn't. Has what I said come true? Yes, it has. In the time of Pebbleson Nephew, young Mr. Vendale, no such thing was ever known as a mistake made in a

consignment delivered at the doors. There's a nistake been made now. Please to remark that it happened before Miss Margaret scame here. For which reason it don't go against what I have said respecting Miss Margaret singing round the and respecting also margaret singing round the luck. Read that, sir," concluded Joey, pointing attention to a special passage in the report, with a foreinger which appeared to be in process of laking in through the pores nothing more remarkable than dirt. "It's foreign to my nature to crow over the bouse I serve, but I feel it a kird of a solemn duty to ask you to read that," Vendale read as follows:—"Note, respecting the Swiss champagne. An irregularity has been

the Swiss champague. An irregularity has been discovered in the last consignment received from the firm of Defreshier & Co." Vendale stopped, and referred to a memorandum-book

stopped, and referred to a memorandum-book by bis side. "That was in Widing's time," he said. "The vintage was a particularly good one, and he took the whole of it. The Swiss champagne has done very well, hasn's it!"

"I don't say it's done badly," neswered the Cellarman. "It may have got sick in our customers' bins, or it may have bust in our customers' bands. But I don't say it's done badly with us."

Vendate resumed the reading of the note:-"We find the number of the cases to be quite correct by the books. But six of them, which present a slight difference from the rest in the brand, have been opened, and have been found to contain a red wine instead of champague. The similarity in the brands, we suppose, caused a mistage to be made in sending the consignment from Neuchatel. The error has not been found to extend beyond six cases."

"Is that all!" exclaimed Vendale, tossing the note away from him. Joey Ladle's eye followed the flying morsel of

paper drearily.

"I'm glad to see you take it easy, sir," he sald.
"Whatever happens, it will be always a comfort to you to remember that you took it easy at first. Sometimes one mistake leads to another. A man drops a bit of orange-peel on the pavement by mistake, and another man treads on it by mistake, and another man treads on it by mistake, and there's a job at the hospital, and a party crippled for lite. I'm glad you take it easy, sir. In Publeson Nephew's time we shouldn't have taken it easy till we had seen the end of it. Without desiring to crow over the house, Young Mr. Vendale, I wish you well through it. No offense, sir," said the Cellarman, opening the door to go out, and looking in again ominously before he shut it. "I'm muddled and molloncolly, I grant you. But I'm an old servant of Pebbleson Nephew, and I wish you well through them six cases of red wine." Left by himself, Vendule laughed, and took up his pen. "I may as well send a line to Defres-nier and Company," he thought, "before I forget it." He wrote at once in these terms:-

"Dear Sirs:—We are taking stock, and a triffing mistake has been discovered in the last consignment of champagne sent by your bouse to ours. Six of the cases contain red wine—which we hereby return to you. The matter can easily be set right either by your sending us six cases of champagne, if they can be preduced, or, if not, by your crediting us with the value of six cases on the amount last paid (five hundred pounds) by our firm to yours. Your faithful servants.

The letter despatched to the post, the subject

This letter despatched to the post, the subject dropped at once out of Vendale's mind. He had other and far more interesting matters to think or. Later in the day he paid the visit to Oben-reizer which had been agreed between them. Certain evenings in the week were set apart which he was privileged to spend with Marguerite—always, however, in the presence of a third person. On this stipulation Obenrelzer politely but positively insisted. The one con-cession he made was to give Vendale his choice of who the third person should be. Confiding in past experience, his choice fell unheatlatingly upon the excellent woman who mended Obenreizer's stockings. On hearing of the respon-sibility intrusted to her, Madame Dor's intellectual nature burst suddenly into a new stage of development. She waited till Obenreizer's eye was oil her, and then she looked at Vendale and

dimly winked.

The time passed—the happy evenings with Marguerite came and went. It was the tenth norning since Vendale had written to the Swiss firm, when the answer appeared on his desk, with the other letters of the day:—

"Dear Sirs:-We bog to offer our excuses for the lit-tic mistake which has happened. At the same tima we regret to add that the statement of our error, with "Dear Sirs:—We beg to offer our excuses for the little nebtake which has happened. At the same tims we regret to add that the statement of our error, with which you have favored us, has led to a very nexpected discovery. The affair is a most serious one for you and for us. The particulars are as follows:—
"Having no more champagne of the vintage last sent to you, we made arrangements to credit your firm, with the value of the six cases, as suggested by yourself. On taking this step certain forms observed in our mode of doing ousness necessitated a reference to our bankers book, as well as to our ledger. The result is a moral certainty that no such remittance as you mention can have reached our house, and a literal certainty that no such remittance has been paid to our arcount at the bank.
"It is needless, at this stage of the proceedings, to trouble you with details. The money has unquestionably been stolen in the course of lis transit from you to us. Certain peculiarlies which we observe, relating to the manner in which the traud has been perpetrated, lead us to conclude that the thief may have calculated on being able to pay the missing sum to our bat ker before an inevitable dacovery followed the annual striking of our balance. This would not have happened in the usual course, for another three months. During that period, but for your letter, we might have remained perfectly unconscious of the robbery that has been elemented.

"We mention this last circumstance, as it may help to show basing some advance towards discovery, by examining the receipt (torged of course) which has no doubt purported to come to you from our house. Be pleased to look and see whether it is a receipt entirely in manuscript, or whether it is a numbered and printed form which merely requires the filling in of the amount. The settlement of this apparently trivial question is, we assure you, a matter of vital importance. Anxiously awsting your sections.

Vendale laid the letter on his desk, and waited a moment to steady his minud under t

Vendale laid the letter on his desk, and waited a moment to steady his mind under the shock that had fallen on it. At the time of all others when it was most important to him to increase the value of his business, that business was threatened with a loss of five hundred pounds. He thought of Marguerite, as he took the key from his pocket and opened the fron chamber in the wall in which the books and papers of the firm were kept.

He was still in the chamber, searching for the

forged receipt, when he was startled by a voice speaking close behind him. "A thousand pardons," said the voice; "I am atraid I disturb you." He turned, and found himself face to face with

"I have called," pursued Obenreizer, "to know if I can be of any use. Business of my own takes me away for some days to Manchester and Liverpool. Can I combine any business of yours with it? I am entirely at your disposal, in the character of commercial traveller for the firm of

Wilding & Co." "Excuse me for one moment," said Vendale: "I will speak to you directly." He turned round again, and continued his search among the papers. "You come at a time when triendly offers are more than usually precious to me," he resumed, "I have had very had news this morning from Neuchatel."

"Bad news!" exclaimed Obenreizer. "From Defresnier & Co?" "Yes. A remittance we sent to them has been stolen. I am tureatened with a loss of five hun-

dred pounds. What's that!"

Turning sharply, and looking into the room for the second time, Vendale discovered his envelope-case overturown on the floor, and Obenicizer on his knees picking up the contents.

"All my awkwardnesss!" said Obenreize "This dreadful news of yours startled me; I stepped back—" He became too deeply interested in collecting the scattered envelopes to

inish the sentence.
"Don't trouble yourself," said Vendale. "The clerk will pick the things up,"
"This dreadul news!" repeated Obenreizer, persisting in collecting the envelopes. "This dreadful news!"

dieadful news!" . If you will read the letter," said Vendule,